

Definitions of Stipulations and Implications of the Level of Stipulation

Professional Services Division October 2007

Overview of this Report

At the August 2007 COA meeting, the Committee began the discussion about refining the definitions of stipulations and implications of the level of stipulations under the revised accreditation system contained in the *Accreditation Handbook*. This agenda item continues that discussion. The results of these discussions will lead to a revision of the definitions included in the new *Handbook*. The objective of revising the definitions of stipulations is to provide greater direction to reviewers in determining appropriate levels of recommended stipulations, to better serve institutions by enhancing the understanding of the various levels of stipulations, and clear information to the COA.

Staff Recommendation

This is an information item for discussion only.

Background

Under the revised accreditation system, the types and terminology of stipulations remains unchanged from the previous system. Stipulations can still be of three primary categories: technical, substantive, and probationary. Institutions are still required to address any stipulations within one year, although the COA has the discretion to allow additional time if appropriate. Under the new system, however, the Committee on Accreditation has greater flexibility. For instance, the COA may ask for information from an institution sooner than one year to ensure sufficient progress is being made in addressing stipulations, and may require additional follow-up with an institution beyond one year to ensure the institution is maintaining the improvements that were made to address the stipulations.

One of the major concerns about the past accreditation system was consistency in reviews. Although professional judgment is a hallmark of accreditation, concerns about establishing mechanisms and procedures to ensure that all reviews are of an equal level of rigor requires that the COA review the definitions of the stipulations to determine if they need revision or refinement. The definitions should allow for effective use by review teams in determining a recommended level of stipulation, by the COA in making accreditation determinations, and by the personnel at an institution or program to facilitate their understanding and rationale behind the finding.

Definitions of Stipulations

The current definitions of the various types of stipulations are contained in Chapter 5 of the *Accreditation Handbook*. They are reproduced in Appendix A.

Summary of the August 2007 COA meeting

The COA had extensive discussion about this issue and there was agreement that clarification of both the definitions and implications of stipulations was necessary. The following three major ideas were discussed:

- 1) The possibility of changing the terminology related to “accreditation with technical stipulations” and “accreditation with substantive stipulations” to “major stipulations” and “minor stipulations.” In addition, there was discussion of not having any modifiers beyond the term “stipulation”. It was not clear that there was consensus on this idea.
- 2) The possibility of developing rubrics to be used by review teams and the COA to ensure consistent use of the various accreditation findings, particularly with respect to stipulations. This idea did appear to have general agreement by the Committee members; however, the development of the rubrics could be a lengthy process.
- 3) Clarification of the actions resulting from and implications of the various levels of accreditation findings. This idea also appeared to have some general support and additional information is provided for further consideration in this item.

Clarification of Actions/Implications of Various Levels of Accreditation Findings

Deliberations related to the determination of accreditation recommendations by review teams and deliberations related to the actual accreditation decision by the COA often turn to the type of follow up or action desired after a decision is rendered. This suggests that clarification of the types of action that could result from various accreditation recommendations may be helpful to review teams, to the COA, and to the institution itself. As such, staff suggests COA consideration and discussion of the following:

Current Stipulation Term	Accreditation	Technical	Substantive	Probationary
Possible terminology for the revised system	Accreditation	Minor	Major	Probationary
Options for recommended stipulations				
No required follow-up beyond the routine accreditation activities, i.e. biennial reports.	✓			
Require follow up for areas of “minor” concern in a 7 th year report.	✓	✓		
Require that the stipulations be addressed in the 7 th year follow up report.		✓	✓	
Require that the stipulations be addressed in the 7 th year follow up report, ongoing biennial reports and through the next accreditation cycle.				✓
Require follow up in periodic reports (30 days, 90 days, etc) to ensure that appropriate action is being taken in a timely manner.			✓	✓
Require a re-visit by staff and team leader.		✓	✓	

Current Stipulation Term	Accreditation	Technical	Substantive	Probationary
Possible terminology for the revised system	Accreditation	Minor	Major	Probationary
Options for recommended stipulations				
Require a re-visit by staff, team leader, and 1 or more team members.			✓	✓
Require institution to notify all current and prospective candidates of the institution's accreditation status			✓	✓
Prohibit institution from accepting new candidates in one or more programs until the stipulation has been met.				✓
Prohibit institution from proposing new programs until the stipulation has been met.				✓

Definitions

In addition to the chart above, the definitions would still need to be refined. Together, the revised definitions along with a chart such as the one above should help provide better guidance to COA, review teams and institutions.

Recommendation

This item is for discussion only and Commission staff seeks direction from COA. Commission staff will incorporate the suggestions of COA into a revised draft and return for further discussion at the next COA meeting. Once new definitions and implications are established by the COA, they will be included in the new *Accreditation Handbook*.

APPENDIX A
Types and Definitions of Accreditation Stipulations
Excerpt from Chapter 5 of the Accreditation Handbook

C. Accreditation Team Recommendations

ACCREDITATION

The team recommendation of **Accreditation** is defined as verifying that the institution in question has demonstrated that, when judged as a whole, it meets or exceeds the Common and Program Standards as selected by the institution pursuant to the options listed in the *Accreditation Framework*. The institution (including its credential programs) is judged to be effective in preparing educators and is demonstrating overall quality in its programs and general operations. The accreditation team makes a professional judgment about the institution (and its programs.) The status of **Accreditation** can be achieved even if there are one or two Common standards identified as not met or areas of concern are identified within credential programs.

Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of **Accreditation** is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of five to seven years and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. The institution is not required to make additional reports to the Committee on Accreditation and is not obligated to respond to any recommendations made by the accreditation team in its report or comments made by the Committee on Accreditation in its deliberations. The institution is required to abide by all Commission and state regulations. The institution may indicate in all publications and documents its continuing accreditation status and the Committee on Accreditation will note its status in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

ACCREDITATION WITH STIPULATIONS

Note: This accreditation status is sub-divided into three parts -- **Accreditation with Technical Stipulations**, **Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations** and **Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations**.

Accreditation with Technical Stipulations

The recommendation of **Accreditation with Technical Stipulations** by an accreditation team is defined as verifying that the institution has been found by the team to have some Common Standards or Program Standards not met or not fully met. However, the concerns or problems are of primarily of a technical nature (defined as operational, administrative, or procedural concerns or problems). The institution is determined to have overall quality and effectiveness in its credential programs and general operations apart from the identified technical matters.

Operational Implications

An institution that receives the status of **Accreditation with Technical Stipulations** is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of five to seven years and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. The institution is required to respond to all technical stipulations noted by the Committee on Accreditation and to prepare a written report with appropriate documentation that all stipulations have been removed. This report is to be sent to the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the visit. The Committee on Accreditation may ask the accreditation team chair or a Commission consultant to verify the accuracy and completeness of the institutional response. Typically, a re-visit to the campus by a team member or Commission consultant is not necessary for this accreditation decision. The institution is required to abide by all Commission and state regulations. The institution may indicate in all publications and documents its continuing accreditation status and the Committee on Accreditation will note its status in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations

The recommendation of **Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations** by an accreditation team is defined as verifying that the institution has been found by the team to have significant deficiencies in Common Standards or Program Standards, or areas of concern that are tied to matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence. The team may identify other issues that impinge on the ability of the institution to deliver programs of quality and effectiveness. The institution may be determined to have quality and effectiveness in some of its credential programs and general operations but these areas of quality do not outweigh the identified areas of concern.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving a recommendation of **Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations** is permitted to continue all approved credential programs for a period of one calendar year. The Committee on Accreditation considers if the institution should be given permission to propose new programs of professional preparation or expand existing programs, or if limitations should be placed on affected programs. The institution may be required to notify students of its accreditation status. The notification could be limited to students in a particular program or could apply to all students at the institution. The institution is required to respond to all substantive stipulations noted by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written report with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been removed and to prepare for a focused re-visit by an accreditation team (or in some cases, Commission staff). The institution will work with the original consultant to plan the re-visit that will address the stated concerns of the original accreditation team. The report of the re-visit team is to be received and acted upon by the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the original visit.

The institution is required to abide by all Commission and state regulations. The institution may indicate in all publications and documents its continuing accreditation status and the Committee on Accreditation will note its status in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on

Teacher Credentialing. Once all stipulations are removed, the institution is granted **Accreditation** and is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of four to six years and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. The institution will notify its constituency of its change of accreditation status as it sees fit.

Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations

The recommendation of **Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations** by an accreditation team is defined as verifying that the institution has been found by the team to have serious deficiencies in Common Standards or Program Standards, or significant areas of concern that are tied to matters of curriculum, field experience, or candidate competence. The team may identify other issues that are preventing the institution from delivering programs of quality and effectiveness. The institution may be determined to have quality and effectiveness in some of its credential programs and general operations but these areas of quality do not outweigh the identified areas of concern. A probationary stipulation may require that a severely deficient program be discontinued.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving a recommendation of **Accreditation with Probationary Stipulations** is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of one calendar year. The institution may not propose new programs of professional preparation or expand existing programs. Limitations may be placed on affected programs. . The institution is required to notify students of its accreditation status. The notification could be limited to students in a particular program or could apply to all students at the institution. The institution is required to respond to all probationary stipulations noted by the Committee on Accreditation by preparing a written report with appropriate documentation demonstrating that all stipulations have been removed and to prepare for a focused re-visit by an accreditation team. The institution will work with the original consultant to plan the re-visit that will address the stated concerns of the original accreditation team. The report of the re-visit team is to be received and acted upon by the Committee on Accreditation within one calendar year of the original visit.

In cases where a team recommends that a severely deficient program be discontinued, the Committee on Accreditation may require the institution to file a plan for discontinuation within 60 days of the original visit. That plan must address the needs of current students and provide evidence that the institution will admit no students after the end of the semester or quarter in which the original visit occurred.

The institution is required to abide by all Commission and state regulations. The Committee on Accreditation will note its status in the Committee's annual report to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. If all stipulations are removed within the year, the institution is granted **Accreditation** and is permitted to continue all accredited credential programs for a period of four to six years and to propose new credential programs to the Committee on Accreditation at any time. On some occasions the Committee on Accreditation will continue stipulations for an additional period of time when significant progress has been made, but additional time is needed to remedy the deficiencies identified earlier. In the event that the institution does not respond

appropriately to the probationary stipulations according to the timeline, the institution is brought back to the Committee on Accreditation for consideration of **Denial of Accreditation**.

DENIAL OF ACCREDITATION

The recommendation of **Denial of Accreditation** by an accreditation team is defined as the removal of authority for operating accredited credential programs at that particular institution because the team has found compelling evidence that the institution has routinely ignored or violated the Common Standards and Program Standards to the level that the competence of the individuals being recommended for credentials is in serious question. The institution is determined not to have minimal quality and effectiveness in its credential programs and general operations. A recommendation for **Denial of Accreditation** occurs when the team has evidence that closing all credential programs and requiring an interim planning and re-structuring period is the most viable solution to the problems encountered.

If an accreditation team is conducting a re-visit to an institution that had received substantive stipulations as a result of a previous accreditation visit and the re-visit team finds that the stipulations have not been removed, the re-visit team must, according to the *Accreditation Framework*, recommend **Denial of Accreditation**. The Committee on Accreditation may, if requested by the institution, permit an additional period to remedy severe deficiencies if the Committee finds (a) substantial progress has been and/or (b) special circumstances described by the institution justify a delay.

Operational Implications

An institution receiving **Denial of Accreditation** would be required to take immediate steps to close all credential programs at the end of the semester or quarter in which the Committee on Accreditation decision took place. The institution would be required to file a plan of discontinuation within 90 days of the Committee's decision. The plan would give information and assurances regarding the institution's effort to place currently enrolled students in other programs or to provide adequate assistance to permit students to complete their particular program.

The institution will be required to announce that it has had its accreditation for educator preparation withdrawn. The institution would be enjoined from re-applying for accreditation (COA) for two years and would be required to make a formal application to the Committee on Accreditation which would include the submission of a complete institutional self study report including responses to the Commons Standards and Program Standards. The self-study must show clearly how the institution has attended to all problems noted in the accreditation team report that recommended **Denial of Accreditation**. The Committee on Accreditation would make a decision on the status of the institution. If the Committee grants initial accreditation to the institution and its programs, a full accreditation visit will be scheduled within two years.